Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Suggestions for the 2017 Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference from the perspective of the progressive approach

Working paper submitted by Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Turkey

1. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses regime and thus an essential pillar of global peace and security. The 2020 Treaty review cycle should be forward-looking and focus on States parties' common interests in supporting and strengthening the Treaty. The Treaty provides the foundation for States to work together on key building blocks to achieve common objectives. It contains hard-won treaty-level commitments to the goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons, as provided in article VI.

2. As we commence the 2020 Treaty review cycle, we need to reaffirm the centrality of the Treaty and to focus on a "progressive approach" to the implementation of the consensus 2010 action plan and the 13 practical steps to disarmament agreed at the 2000 Review Conference. We must also maintain our focus on challenges to the critical role of the Treaty in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Any process that can effectively lead us to a world free of nuclear weapons will by necessity be an inclusive one. We must continue our efforts to ensure the participation of States with nuclear weapons in initiatives by engaging in dialogue that will guide us progressively towards the goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

3. We must take into account the prevailing international security environment. Only by addressing both the security and the humanitarian dimensions of nuclear weapons can we take the incremental but necessary steps that will enhance security for all and provide the best chance of achieving a world without nuclear weapons. The only way to achieve the complete elimination of nuclear weapons is through effective, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament. This will only be achieved through the constructive engagement of all relevant parties.

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4. Progress in multilateral nuclear disarmament also requires the promotion of practical and effective confidence-building measures. Trust must be built through the demonstrated implementation of concrete disarmament measures by nuclear-weapon States, as well as a commitment to non-proliferation by all non-nuclear-weapon States and continuing support for the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which ensure confidence in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In addition, the central role of IAEA in assisting Member States to ensure the highest levels of safety and security is essential to facilitating the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

5. Renewed momentum has been given to a number of parallel and simultaneous measures, or "building blocks", which are necessary to achieving the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. The 2010 action plan is the consensus-based road map for the elimination of nuclear weapons, and it is vitally important that all States parties continue work to implement those agreed steps.

6. The 2017 Preparatory Commission for the Treaty should work towards a positive agenda for the 2020 Review Conference and demonstrate practical progress in its outcome document. That includes progress on many items in the 2010 action plan, including developing nuclear disarmament verification capabilities, increasing transparency measures, negotiating a verifiable and non-discriminatory treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and achieving the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We must be forward-looking, constructive and focused on common ground to advance our shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons.